

2004

Human Rights Index

University of Iowa Center for Human Rights

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.uiowa.edu/iowareview>

Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

University of Iowa Center for Human Rights. "Human Rights Index." *The Iowa Review* 34.3 (2004): v-vi. Web.
Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.S879>

This Contents is brought to you for free and open access by Iowa Research Online. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Iowa Review by an authorized administrator of Iowa Research Online. For more information, please contact lib-ir@uiowa.edu.

HUMAN RIGHTS INDEX

Prepared by the University of Iowa Center for Human Rights (UICHR)*

*Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired,
signifies in the final sense a theft from those who hunger and are not
fed, those who are cold and are not clothed.*

—President Dwight D. Eisenhower, 16 April 1953

As of mid-September 2004, the United States had spent approximately **\$136 billion (\$136,000,000,000)** on the war in Iraq, an average of **\$1,924** per U.S. household, projected to rise to approximately **\$275 billion (\$275,000,000,000)** or an average of **\$3,919** per U.S. household over the next three years (Institute for Policy Studies and *The Washington Times*, July 2004; Iraq Body Count and National Priorities Project, September 2004). Apart from the cost of the war to human life and limb (e.g., over 1,025 U.S. troops and 13,000 Iraqi civilians killed, based on September 2004 sources; over 11,000 coalition troops and 40,000 Iraqi civilians wounded, based on July 2004 sources), here follows an index of selected “goods” that, from a human rights perspective, could have been purchased with \$136 billion.

10,400,000: U.S. dollars needed to pay for the vaccination of 40 million children infected by measles yearly (26 cents per child) or to save 750,000 children who die of the disease each year, *i.e.*, **.0076%** of \$136 billion Iraq war appropriations spent so far (UNICEF, 16 Aug 2004)

15,000,000: U.S. dollars needed under the Vietnam Human Rights Act of 2004 (H.R. 1587) over the next five years to promote human rights and democracy in Vietnam and to prevent the Vietnamese government from jamming Radio Free Asia broadcasting programs, *i.e.*, **.01%** of \$136 billion Iraq war appropriations spent so far (Congressional Budget Office, 2004)

23,000,000: U.S. dollars needed to fund the Special Court created for Sierra Leone to prosecute serious war crimes committed during the country’s 11-year civil war, *i.e.*, **.016%** of \$136 billion Iraq war appropriations spent so far (Human Rights Watch 2004)

100,800,000: U.S. dollars minimally needed by the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) during the 2004-05 biennium (\$56.8 million from the U.N. budget and \$44 million from voluntary governmental and non-governmental contributions) to fund its mission of promoting and protecting human rights worldwide, *i.e.*, **.08%** of \$136 billion Iraq war appropriations spent so far (Office of the UNHCHR, 2004)

- 171,000,000:** U.S. dollars needed and requested in December 2003 by the U.N. World Food Program in emergency funding from the international community to feed 6.5 million people starving in North Korea, *i.e.*, .125% of \$136 billion Iraq war appropriations spent so far (World Food Program, 2003)
- 1,780,000,000:** U.S. dollars needed annually to halve, by 2015, the 1.1 billion people worldwide with no access to improved drinking water, and to reduce commensurately the 1.6 million deaths attributed to unsafe drinking water and sanitation, *i.e.*, 1.3% of the \$136 billion Iraq war appropriations spent so far (World Health Organization, 2004; International Year of Water, 2003)
- 4,000,000,000:** U.S. dollars needed to fund missions of the U.N. Department of Peace Keeping Operations in areas such as Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Haiti, Liberia, etc.—one-half of one percent of the world's combined military spending, *i.e.*, 2.9% of \$136 billion Iraq war appropriations spent so far (UNESCAP Press Release, 26 May 2004)
- 10,000,000,000:** U.S. dollars needed to fight the AIDS epidemic in low to middle income countries annually, *i.e.*, 7.35% of \$136 billion Iraq war appropriations spent so far (UNAIDS, 20 Nov 2003)
- 24,000,000,000:** U.S. dollars needed to cut world hunger in half by 2015, *i.e.*, 17.6% of \$136 billion Iraq war appropriations spent so far (U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization, 2002)
- 58,432,700,000:** U.S. dollars needed to pay average annual secondary school teacher's salary in the United States for the 1,270,000 secondary school teachers in the U.S., *i.e.*, 43% of \$136 billion Iraq war appropriations spent so far (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2002; The Center for Education Reform, 2004)
- 75,640,000,000:** Estimated U.S. dollars needed to cover median "typical senior" Medicare drug expenses for approximately 40 million U.S. senior citizens annually (\$1,891 each), *i.e.*, 58.02% of \$136 billion Iraq war appropriations spent so far (Congressional Budget Office, 2003; Coalition on Human Needs, 2002)
- 133,696,160,000:** U.S. dollars needed annually for average individual health insurance from a preferred U.S. insurance provider for the estimated 39,520,000 Americans (13.4% of the total U.S. population) currently without health insurance coverage of any kind, *i.e.*, 98.3% of \$136 billion Iraq war appropriations spent so far (CBS News, 2004; U.S. Census Bureau, 2003)

**For further information on human rights, please visit The University of Iowa Center for Human Rights (UICHR) web site: www.uichr.org*